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AUSTRIA-IV

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THE PEASANT HEROES OF THE TYROL

(The Uprising of the Tyrolese against Napoleon in 1809)

By the recent Austrian artist, Franz von Defregger, the most noted painter of the Tyrolese

ONE of the most heroic tales of Napoleon's days is that of the German peasants of the Tyrol. The hardy mountaineers of the Alps are not all citizens of the Swiss Republic. The eastern half of the Alps, known as the Tyrol, belongs to Austria; and the sturdy peasants are very loyal to their Austrian sovereigns. They proved this most devotedly in the days of Austria's great need, when Napoleon had defeated and almost wholly subjugated her. The Tyrol had been given by Napoleon as a sort of present to Bavaria, one of his allies; but when, in 1809, news reached the mountains that Austria had begun a last desperate war against the conqueror, the Tyrolese resolved to help.

They were almost without weapons; but secretly in their smithies they made arms. They formed their plans under the leadership of an innkeeper and horse-dealer, Andreas Hofer. By a sudden rising they drove away the Bavarian troops who guarded the land, and then they held their mountain passes against all the forces of France and her allies. Army after army was defeated by them; but at length Austria gave up the struggle, and left the Tyrolese confronted by all the might of France. Hofer was entrapped, was charged with being a rebel against his conquerors, and was shot. The Tyrolese surrendered. Later, when Napoleon was overthrown, these loyal subjects were restored to Austria.





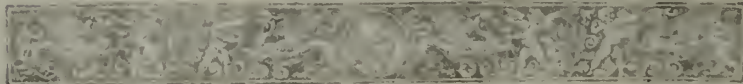
THE PEASANT HEROES OF THE TYROL

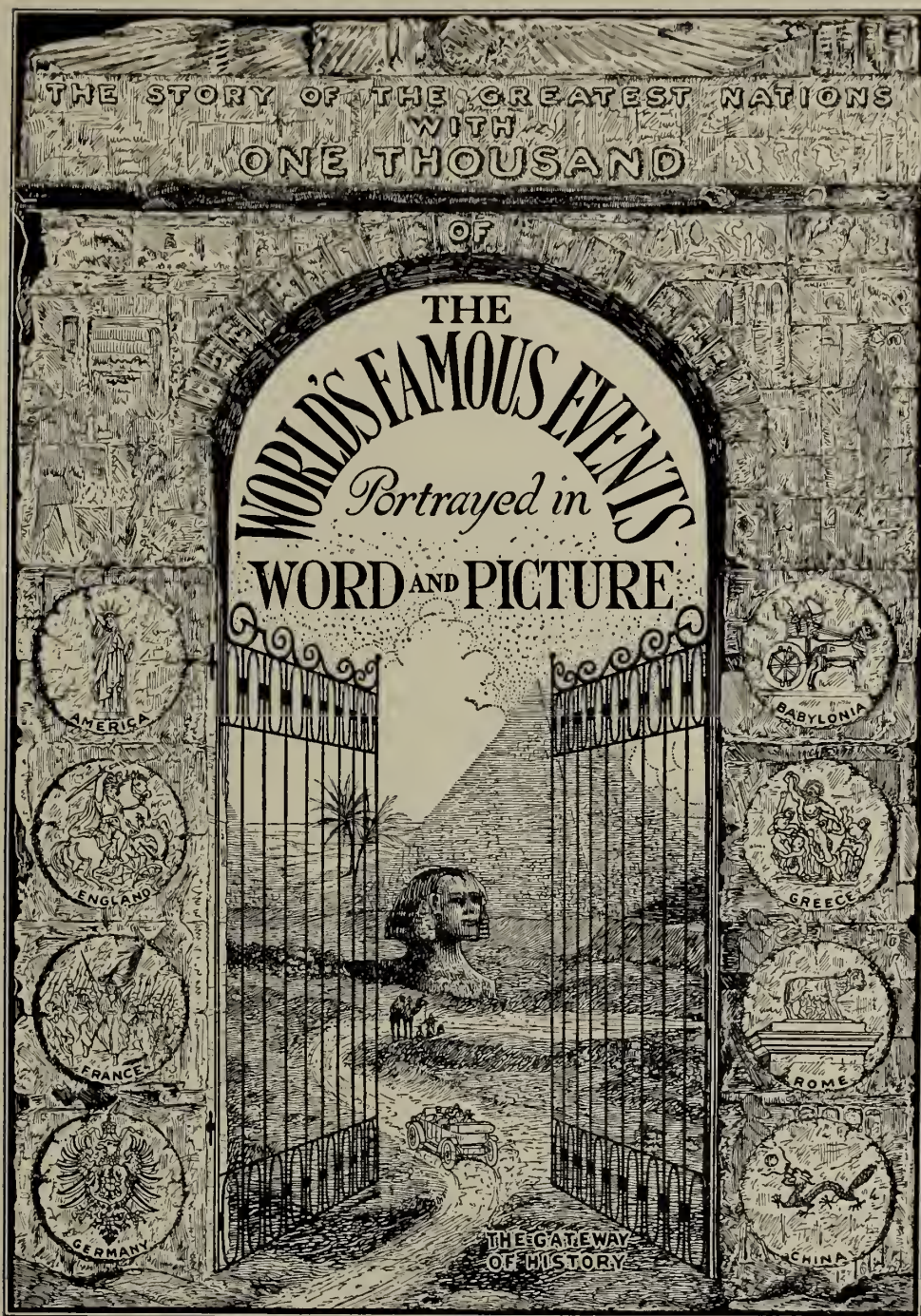
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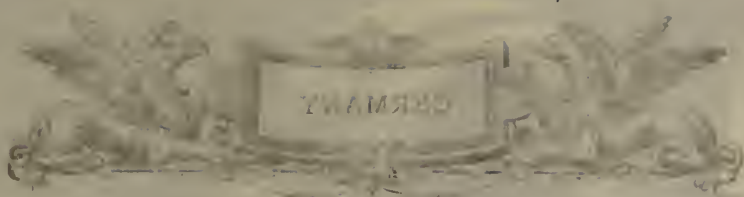
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They were shot without weapons but severely in their
smiles they are in pain. They found their place in the
leadership of an impetuous and honest Arab and Holst.
By a sudden strike they drove away the German troops who
surrounded the land and then they held it in mountain passes
again until the force of German and British Army after many
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Volume Fourth



THE DAYS OF ANARCHY

Translated from the French of Louis F. de la Motte, by a Private Secretary

London: Published by J. W. Smith, 10, Old Bailey, and J. W. Smith, 10, Old Bailey, and J. W. Smith, 10, Old Bailey.

THE first of the days of anarchy was the day when the people of France, in the name of the Republic, elected a President of the Republic. The President of the Republic was elected by the people of France, in the name of the Republic, to the office of President of the Republic. The President of the Republic was elected by the people of France, in the name of the Republic, to the office of President of the Republic. The President of the Republic was elected by the people of France, in the name of the Republic, to the office of President of the Republic.

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THE DAYS OF ANARCHY

(Barbarossa's Son, the Emperor Philip, Slain by a Private Enemy)

*From the series of historical paintings by the recent German artist,
Alexander Zick*

THE glory of the great Teutonic empire faded with the death of the mighty Emperor Barbarossa. When in the year 1189 he perished on his great crusade, the splendor of the Middle Ages perished with him. During the following brief reign a superstitious legend arose among the German people that the spirit of the ancient Theodoric, earliest of all the Teutonic emperors, had been seen riding up and down the Rhine on a huge black warhorse, mourning in gloomy presage of the misery to come.

There was no longer any one power which men obeyed. The Popes encouraged rival claimants to the empire, and even claimed the right to decide who should wear the imperial crown. When Philip of Swabia, the last surviving son of Barbarossa, insisted on holding his throne in defiance of the Popes, he was excommunicated. Many of his subjects felt themselves thus released from all fidelity to him, and finally he was slain by one of his own followers. The murderer, Otto of Wittelsbach, had a private grudge against Philip and, forcing his way into the emperor's presence, slew him while Philip was playing chess. Otto then fought his way unharmed out of the castle. Doubtless he hoped to be protected by the rival emperor, whose path was cleared by Philip's death. But the new emperor had him seized and executed.





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THE GAY COURT OF SICILY

(Frederick II Enjoys the Gayety of His Italian Court)

Painted in 1877 by the German artist, Ferdinand Keller

THE family of Frederick Barbarossa were called the Hohenstaufens. The only male member of the race left after Philip's death was a little child who had been brought up under the care of the Pope. The latter now brought this lad forward and declared him emperor as Frederick II. He had no following in Germany, where the nobles only wanted to be let alone and had readily accepted Philip's rival. Hence we have the peculiar spectacle of one German emperor ruling in his own land while another was acknowledged in Italy, where young Frederick got full possession of the domains of the Hohenstaufens, chief of these being the kingdom of southern Italy and Sicily.

Frederick II was a dashing and brilliant youth, a poet and a student of science, esteemed the handsomest and wittiest man of his times. His court in Sicily was the most cultured and the most artistic as well as the merriest in Europe; and he was the gayest, proudest of his court. When some one taunted him with the loss of his German domains he suddenly set off alone for Germany and summoned the people there to aid him. Such was the reverence for his family name that many Germans did rally round him, and he was soon the actual emperor as well as the nominal one. For a moment the empire was reunited.







THE BATTLE OF THE DYDES

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL





THE BATTLE OF THE BARDS

(The Defeated Minstrel Saves His Life by an Appeal to the Pity
of the Presiding Duchess)

From the series of historical paintings by G. A. Closs, of Stuttgart

JUST as Frederick Barbarossa had typified the iron strength and firmness of the twelfth century, so Frederick II represented the poetry, wit and passion of the thirteenth. These were the days when chivalry and romance were at their fullest splendor and most fantastic extravagance. The year 1207 witnessed a famous poetic contest known as the Battle of the Bards. It was held at the castle of Duke Hermann of Thuringia. Several of the fiery German minstrels had been asserting their superiority over one another. Finally they agreed that they would hold a tournament of song, in which the loser should sacrifice his life as well as his fame.

Chief of the local singers in the contest was Henry of Ofterdingen; and he would have won, had not a stranger poet entered the lists. This was Walther of Vogelweide, the comrade and song-champion of Frederick II, from whose court he came. Walther sang so wonderfully that all the musicians present declared him the winner. Henry of Ofterdingen only saved his life by throwing himself at the feet of the presiding duchess. As he had been her favorite minstrel, she protected him with her mantle and he was spared.







THE POWER OF THE POPES

(The Legend of Pope Urban IV Refusing Pardon to the Knight Tannhauser)

From a painting by the German artist, Edward Kampffer

MANY were the poetic legends framed in that remarkable thirteenth century, the echoes of which have been preserved to us. The old tales of Siegfried now took their final shape. To this period belongs also the noted story of Tannhäuser, which Wagner has elaborated into his wonderful opera.

Tannhäuser was, like Walter Vogelweide, a noble who had devoted himself to the "gentle art of poesie." For his perfection of person and of song, he was said to have been wooed by the pagan love goddess Venus, and to have spent several years with her in her secret bower, shut in the deeps of the mountain still called the Venusberg. Finally Tannhäuser repented this heathen way of life and, deserting Venus, made a pilgrimage to Rome to seek from the Pope forgiveness and restoration to Christianity. This occurred during the rule of the French Pope Urban IV (1261); and he was so shocked at the confession of Tannhäuser that he refused pardon to the repentant sinner. So complete was the belief of those days as to the power of the Pope in such matters, that Tannhäuser accepted unquestioningly the decision that his sin had been beyond forgiveness. In stern despair he went back to Venus to snatch from the remnant of his life such pleasure as he might.







THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, ESQ. OF THE BARR

I have been much surprised to find, that the history of this city, which is so well known to every one, has never before been published. It is a city of so many interesting events, and of so many remarkable men, that it is not surprising, that it should have been the subject of so many histories. But the history of this city, which is so well known to every one, has never before been published. It is a city of so many interesting events, and of so many remarkable men, that it is not surprising, that it should have been the subject of so many histories.

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THE LAST OF THE HOHENSTAUFENS

(The Children of Queen Helene of Sicily Torn from Her and
Imprisoned for Life)

From a painting by the German artist, E. R. von Engerth

IT was against the tremendous religious power and influence of these Popes that the might of the great empire of Germany and its gorgeous Hohenstaufen Emperors was completely broken. The brilliant and daring Frederick II, who had been at first the ward and protégée of the Popes, found himself at length fighting against them, even as Frederick Barbarossa had done. Frederick II died and the Popes continued the struggle against all his house, declaring that the "brood of vipers," the Hohenstaufens, must be completely exterminated.

The last of the family to hold any real power was Frederick's son Manfred who, in the days of Pope Urban IV, ruled Sicily as gayly and brilliantly as his father had done. The Popes invited a French duke, Charles of Anjou, to force Manfred's kingdom from him in the name of the Church. Manfred was defeated and slain in battle, and his wife and children were made prisoners. The unhappy queen, Helene of Sicily, had her four little children torn from her by force and immured in a prison. One of them, a daughter, was afterward released. But the three boys, since they were possible contentants for the empire, were held in dungeons through all their miserable existences, and died without ever having really known life. Such was the tragic ending of the mighty Hohenstaufens.





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RUDOLF OF HAPSBURG AND THE PRIEST

(The Lad who Became an Emperor Performs His First Act of Service for the Church)

Copied from an old woodcut by R. Brendamour

WHEN the power of the Papacy had thus struck down the power of the Emperors, Germany was left in a most woeful condition. All ideas of loyalty and of submission to authority had become confused. The German nobles did not know whether to obey Pope or Emperor, and as a result they obeyed no one. Each little princeling ruled his own land and was more or less at war with all his neighbors. Each strong castle became a center of plunder and oppression. The land was given over to anarchy. From this disorder the Church suffered as badly as anybody. She had destroyed the one power which had perforce compelled evil men to submit to her teachings. So at last the Popes themselves resolved to reërect the very authority they had overthrown. Looking around for a suitable emperor their choice fell on Rudolf of Hapsburg, a young noble noted for his high character and for his religious devotion.

The earliest tale known of Rudolf is the one here depicted. Once as a boy out hunting, he met a priest toiling over the mountains through wind and storm to administer to a dying man the last services of the Church. Rudolf dismounted and insisted on giving the holy man his horse and then leading him along the rocky paths to his destination.







FOUNDING OF THE HAPSBURG ROYAL HOUSE

(Rudolf of Hapsburg Receives the Announcement of His Election
as Emperor)

From a painting by the contemporary Austrian artist, H. Knackfuss

IT was this Rudolf of Hapsburg who was now chosen to rebuild the German Empire. He was approved by the Church because of his religion, and by some of the nobles because of his straightforward and manly character. Most of the great lords, however, accepted him chiefly because of his poverty and small estate which, they thought, would prevent him from dominating them. Rudolf was the founder of the celebrated royal house of Hapsburg, who were long the mightiest monarchs of Europe and who still sit upon the throne of Austria. His chief advocate for the throne was his cousin, a member of the Hohenzollern family from which sprang the great rivals of the Hapsburgs, the present kings of Prussia and emperors of Germany.

This Hohenzollern cousin brought to Rudolf of Hapsburg the news of his election, finding him, as our picture shows, engaged in besieging the Swiss city of Basle with which Rudolf was at quarrel. The new emperor received the announcement of his elevation with solemn earnestness. His first imperial act was to send word to the people of Basle of his election; and with a warning word "I am now stronger than you," he offered them such liberal terms of agreement, that they became his firm friends forever. Rudolf proved himself one of the wisest, most resolute rulers Germany ever had; but even he could not wholly rescue his country from its wild disorder.







WILLIAM TELL

(The Swiss Revolt Against Austria Begins with the Escape of Tell)

*After a painting by the Bavarian master, William von Kaulbach
(1805-1874)*

AS emperor, Rudolf of Hapsburg secured for his own family the possession of the great duchy of Austria, as well as many other provinces in Germany. Hence Rudolf's son, Albert of Austria, became emperor, and instead of being an impoverished ruler like his father, Albert was wealthy and powerful. He lacked, however, his father's wisdom. Most of the people of the Swiss mountains were Albert's vassals; but instead of making friends of them as Rudolf had done of the citizens of Basle, Albert tyrannized over the hardy mountaineers until they rose in rebellion against him.

To his reign belongs the story of William Tell, which has been so often made the theme of fanciful tales that it is no longer easy to separate the facts about Tell from the inventions. He was a Swiss who, in his little district, defied the Austrian governor. He was arrested, but escaped and became a leader of revolt.

Our picture follows the dramatic story of Schiller, who represents Tell as being carried off to prison by the tyrant governor Gessler. A storm arises and, as Tell alone is skilled enough to control the boat, his guards release him to save their lives. Tell steers the tiny bark close to shore, then leaps out suddenly and escapes.





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SWISS INDEPENDENCE ESTABLISHED

(An Austrian Army Crushed by the Swiss at Morgarten)

From a painting by the Bavarian artist, Ferdinand Wagner

WHETHER or not we put credence in the story of William Tell, the Swiss were soon in active revolt against their Austrian overlords, the Hapsburgs. The next Austrian duke, Frederick, fought for the position of German Emperor, having for his chief rival a former bosom friend, Ludwig the Duke of Bavaria. Ludwig became Emperor and declared the Swiss freed from all allegiance to Frederick. This really only meant they had the imperial permission to fight for freedom if they wished. So they pledged themselves to one another to maintain their liberty.

An Austrian army of eight thousand men penetrated the mountain passes to chastise these daring peasants. To oppose the invaders the Swiss of the immediate neighborhood could gather only a little over a thousand men. But this little band met the Austrians boldly. A few of them hurled rocks down upon the invaders from the summit of the passes. The Austrians fell into helpless confusion beneath the avalanche of missiles, and then the remaining Swiss charged them and completely defeated them.

This famous battle of Morgarten took place in 1315, and established the independence of Switzerland—independence, that is, of the Austrian dukes; for the Swiss still regarded themselves as members of the German Empire.







THE BLACK SLAVE

The following is a translation of the original text, which is a poem by the author of the book, and is published by the author.

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The following is a translation of the original text, which is a poem by the author of the book, and is published by the author.





THE BLACK PLAGUE

(The Emperor Ludwig IV. Having Been Expelled by the Church, is
Refused Christian Burial)

From a painting by Ferdinand Leeke, of Munich, born 1859

THE Emperor Ludwig or Louis IV, who had encouraged the Swiss in their revolt against his Austrian rival, was the victim of a tragic fate. It was during Ludwig's reign that the awful plague of the Black Death swept over Europe. Whole cities were depopulated by this dreadful scourge, this disease which seized upon healthy persons and within a few hours left them dead and their bodies blackening with corruption.

Ludwig had refused to obey the Pope in governing the empire, so the Pope had placed a curse upon Germany. Ludwig, a sincerely religious if somewhat superstitious individual rather over-impressed with his own importance in the universe, feared that this awful disease was inflicted on all Europe in punishment for his sin. To be sure the plague was just as terrible in other lands, but the Emperor blamed it all upon himself. He entreated the Church not to punish his people for his sin. He offered to resign his office and go upon a pilgrimage. But the Pope could not stay the plague and would not pardon Ludwig, so the despairing Emperor perforce continued the dreary struggle of the State against the Church. Ludwig himself died of the plague at last, as did probably half his nation. His body was refused Christian burial by the relentless priests.



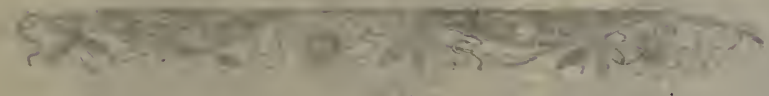




STORY OF WICKET

The story of Wicket is a tale of the life and death of a man who lived in the days of the olden times.

The story of Wicket is a tale of the life and death of a man who lived in the days of the olden times. It is a story of a man who was born in a poor family, but who by his own efforts and the help of his friends, became a great man. He was a man of many talents, and he was a man of many virtues. He was a man who was loved by all who knew him, and he was a man who was respected by all who knew him. He was a man who was a great leader, and he was a man who was a great teacher. He was a man who was a great friend, and he was a man who was a great enemy. He was a man who was a great man, and he was a man who was a great man.





ARNOLD WINKELRIED

(The Swiss Hero Wins for His Countrymen the Battle of Sempach by Sacrificing His own Life)

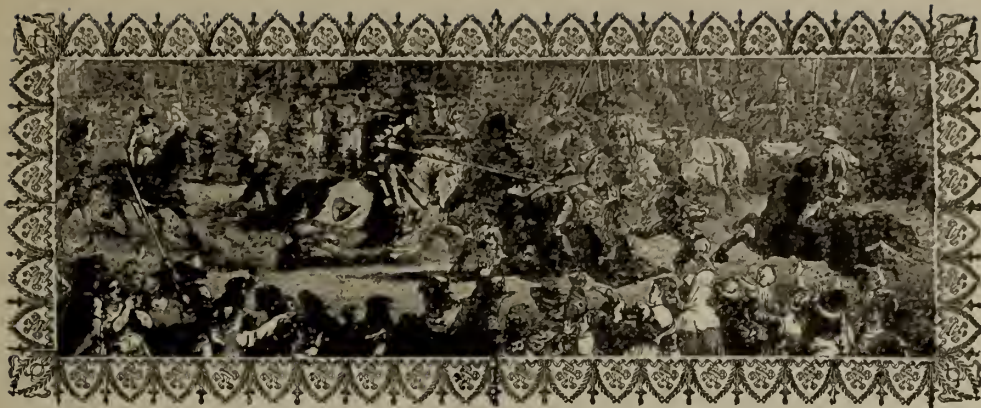
Painted in 1866 by the Swiss artist, Karl Jauslin

THE Black Death made the survivors among the common people of Germany much more powerful. This was partly because being fewer in number they were much more necessary for the cultivation of the soil; and partly because so many of the nobles had perished that in some places there were no longer any overlords at all. As a result the cities all through Germany began forming leagues of their own and asserting a practical independence of the nobility. In northern Germany there thus grew up the great "free cities." But in the south, where the nobles were stronger, there was civil war.

The leader of the nobles was Ludwig, another member of the Hapsburg family which had become so powerful as dukes of Austria, and since Ludwig championed one party, the Swiss mountaineers were naturally drawn into the struggle in behalf of the other. Thus democracy was arrayed against aristocracy throughout southern Germany, and a second time, as at Morgarten, an Austrian army invaded Switzerland. This time Ludwig wisely avoided the narrower mountain passes, and attacked the Swiss on open ground at Sempach. The Swiss saw no way of breaking the solid rank of Austrian spears, until Arnold Winkelried rushed forward and by sweeping as many spears as he could into his own body, made a gap through which his comrades rushed to victory.







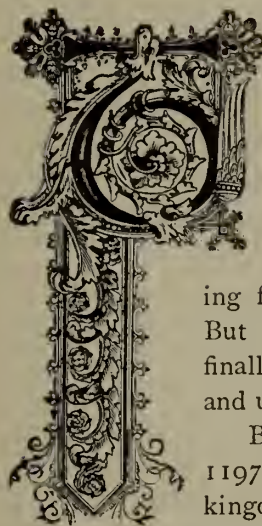
TOURNEY AT THE WEDDING OF FREDERICK AND ISABELLE

THE STORY OF THE GREATEST NATIONS

MODERN NATIONS—GERMANY

Chapter LVI

THE FALL OF THE HOHENSTAUFENS AND THE DISRUPTION OF GERMANY



THE Hohenstaufens seemed peculiarly fitted to enhance the splendor of the German empire. They were majestic, handsome men, strong of intellect and resolute of purpose. Of almost every one of them it might be said, as of Barbarossa himself, that they seemed born to be kings. Under them the land was well governed, the liberal arts were encouraged, and civilization, rousing from its long sleep, seemed fairly bursting into blossom. But their power became weakened, their empire crippled, and finally they were themselves utterly destroyed, by their long and unhappy contest with the popes.

Barbarossa was succeeded by his son, Henry VI. (1190–1197). Henry, by marriage, extended his dominion over the kingdom of Southern Italy, or Sicily, and he made extensive and able preparations for the conquest of the Eastern Empire and the Holy Land. His ultimate aim seems to have been the subjugation of the entire world; but he was harsh and cruel, rebellion ham-

pered him on every side, and he died in Italy before any of his plans reached fruition.

Henry left a three-year-old son, afterward famous as the Emperor Frederick II. The child had been born in Italy; and with its mother fell into the possession of the great Pope, Innocent III. Innocent at once acknowledged the infant as successor to Henry's rights as King of Sicily, though he made little Frederick accept the kingdom as a vassal of the Church. Innocent then proclaimed himself the boy's guardian, and started him on a thorough and liberal course of education, so that in later years Frederick became recognized as one of the most scholarly men of his time.

It seems probable that the Pope would have liked to make his infant charge Emperor of Germany also; but the law was now firmly established in German minds, that they would have no child to govern them. They therefore passed over Frederick and elected his uncle, Philip "the Gentle," as he was called, the Duke of Swabia, and only surviving son of Barbarossa.

Philip IV. (1197-1208) was originally intended for the Church. He seems to have been a quiet, earnest, fair-minded man, well deserving his popular title of "gentle." He had not sought the empire; on the contrary, he had striven hard to secure it for young Frederick, and only accepted it himself when he found that otherwise it was likely to slip away from his family altogether, and pass to Otto of Saxony, son of Henry the Lion and leader of the Welfs.

Otto did get a sort of election from some of his partisans; and Pope Innocent claimed the right to decide which of the two was really Emperor. Otto, having no other chance of success, readily admitted the Pope's authority, and promised to rule as his vassal; so Innocent decided in his favor. But Philip proved himself well able to uphold the high renown of his family. Strong in the respect and confidence of his people, he gathered his armies, defied the curses which the Pope hurled at him, repeatedly defeated Otto and his partisans, and finally drove his opponent as a fugitive from the country.

Philip was slain in a private quarrel by one of his own partisans, Otto of Wittelsbach, nephew of the Otto whom you will remember as Barbarossa's standard bearer. This younger Otto sought one of Philip's daughters as his wife. His services had been considerable; but his reputation was evil, and the Emperor refused his suit. Disappointed, but seeking the next best thing, Otto demanded a letter recommending him as son-in-law to one of the leading dukes. Philip gave him the letter sealed; the business-like suitor started on his errand, but took the shrewd precaution of breaking the seal and examining his "recommendation." It proved anything but satisfactory, being, in fact, more in the nature of a friendly warning to the prospective father-in-law.

Otto, with the bold, savage fury of the age, turned back and forced his way into the Emperor's presence. Philip, who was playing chess, started back from the intruder, crying, "This is no fit place for fighting!" "No," said Otto, "but it is a fit place for punishing a traitor." He struck down the unprepared Emperor with his sword, fought his way out through the bewildered attendants, gained his horse, and escaped.

Otto of Saxony, or Otto IV. (1208–1214), was the man who most profited by the unexpected murder. He at once reasserted his claim to the throne. There was no one now to oppose him, and he was generally accepted as Emperor. Philip's unhappy little daughter Beatrice threw herself at the new Emperor's feet and demanded vengeance for her murdered father. The Emperor, seeking the friendship of the Hohenstaufen faction, sent in pursuit of the assassin, had him executed, and as soon as Beatrice was old enough wedded her and made her Empress.

The King of France had once ridiculed Otto's pretensions to the throne, and said to him sneeringly, "If you are ever Emperor, I will give you Orleans, Chartres, and Paris." These were three of the chief towns of France, and Otto now sent to remind the king of his promise. The French monarch sent answer that by the three names he had meant three puppies now grown into three old and toothless hounds, which he sent to the Emperor. The present of a poor dog was considered grossly insulting in those days, so Otto found himself involved in an unpleasant quarrel.

A much more serious one arose with Pope Innocent. You will remember that Otto had sworn submission to the Pope; but when he became actually Emperor, the necessities of his position soon forced him into the same defiant attitude as the Hohenstaufens, toward the papacy. He was excommunicated in 1210; and Pope Innocent called on the German princes to declare Otto deposed, and to elect as Emperor the Pope's young ward, Frederick, the son of Henry VI. The partisans of the Hohenstaufens were only too glad to obey; and the next year Otto, who had been squabbling with Innocent in Italy, hastened back to Germany with a civil war upon his hands.

Here begins Frederick's romantic career. He was only seventeen, but because of his wit, his eloquence, his learning, and his manly beauty, the courtly Italians had already named him "the wonder of the world." He had passed his youth in his quiet little court of Sicily, talking philosophy with learned scholars, or chanting soft love poems with passionate southern minstrels. Now the fiery energy of his race flashed up within him at the thought of winning for himself the empire of his father and grandfather.

Almost alone he started for Germany in 1212. The Milanese would have barred his passage; but with fierce eloquence he roused the people of a

neighboring town to his assistance, and cut his way through the opposing troops. He crossed the Alps disguised as a pilgrim, with scarce sixty men in his train. Otto was waiting for him with an army before the Swabian city of Constance. Frederick, warned but undaunted, entered Constance almost alone; and the loyal Swabians, delighted to have a Hohenstaufen once more among them, welcomed him with joyous shouts, closed the city gates in Otto's face, and defied him. Unable to storm the town, Otto retreated down the Rhine. Frederick followed, his forces growing like a snowball as he advanced. Everywhere he was received with open arms, his own brilliancy contributing as much as the name of his beloved grandfather to his universal welcome.

Otto lost the empire almost without a struggle. His friends in Saxony stood by him, and as the French king had allied himself with Frederick, Otto joined the people of Holland in an attack on France. He was completely defeated by the French in the battle of Bouvines, 1214. Shorn of his power, he retreated to Cologne, where he could not even pay the debts his wife had contracted. So he and she fled separately and secretly from the city to his native domain of Brunswick, where he lived in seclusion till his death a few years later.

Frederick II. (1215-1250) had been already declared Emperor in 1211, but after the battle of Bouvines he was again elected, and was formally crowned at Aix in 1215. The imperial banner which had been captured by the French at Bouvines was sent to Frederick with great ceremony and elaborate courtesies. The imperial crown and other regalia he did not get until Otto sent them to him from his death-bed.

The new Emperor had promised his guardian and preceptor, Innocent, to go upon a crusade; but Innocent died, and Frederick found one reason after another for delaying his voyage. By 1220 he had firmly established his authority in Germany, and after that was seldom seen in the land. He was far more an Italian than a German, and always displayed a marked preference for the southern land of his birth. He spent his time either fighting or revelling in Italy, and really his later life belongs more appropriately to the story of that country.

He conquered the Arabs, or Saracens, who held part of his Silician kingdom; and, finding these Mahometans a learned and highly civilized race, he made friends with them, established them in peace within his domains, and even formed regiments of them for his armies. Christianity had not at that time reached the height of looking tenderly and with toleration on other religions, and Frederick's attitude toward these Arabs gave grave offence to many Christians, who declared that he must be secretly a Mahometan himself. The popes became more and more insistent about his promised crusade, and at

last he vowed positively to go within two years. By the end of that time he had gathered a large army around him, and made a start. But the plague had broken out among his followers, and three days later his ships returned to port, Frederick saying he was very ill. Perhaps he was, but he had delayed his expedition so many times that the Pope, Gregory XI., promptly excommunicated him.

Then began the remarkable war of words between these two able men. Frederick, the wit and scholar, issued one public letter after another to the princes and people of Europe, denying all the charges against himself, calling the Pope Antichrist, ridiculing his pretensions, comparing the present wealth and hauteur of the Church with the poverty and humility of the Apostles, and inviting all Europe to unite in restoring to Christianity its ancient spirit of lowliness and peace. Gregory was equally savage and bitter in his public denunciations of the Emperor. Frederick was accused of saying that there had been three great impostors: Moses, the deceiver of the Jews; Mahomet, of the Arabs, and Jesus, of the Christians.

Despite this quarrel, Frederick undertook his crusade the next year, 1228, saying that he went because of his pledged word and not because he cared what the Pope might say or do. Gregory, deeply indignant that a man under the curse of the Church should presume to wear the holy cross of the crusaders, sent word to the Christians in the East to give Frederick no assistance. Nevertheless he accomplished more than any crusade since the first had done, making friends with the sultans of the East, and winning from them by diplomacy rather than force an agreement that Jerusalem and all the territory around should belong to the Christians. The Pope laid the city of Jerusalem under an interdict while Frederick was within its walls. No services of the church could be performed there, and Frederick could find no bishop to place upon his head the holy crown which was the symbol of the kingship of the city. So he took the crown from its resting place with his own hands, and performed the ceremony of coronation himself. Then he returned to Italy.

Gregory had raised an army to strip him of his possessions there; but the papal soldiers proved no match for Frederick's returning veterans. The Pope made peace perforce, removed the ban of excommunication from the Emperor, and no longer warred openly against him.

One most important historical event was due to Frederick's sojourn in the East. While there he formed a friendship with Hermann of Salza, the chief of a body of German knights who were bound together in a brotherhood called the Teutonic Order, which pledged them to devote their lives to fighting against the heathen. Hermann had found that he and his order were gaining little ground in the East, so he arranged with Frederick that the entire

brotherhood should remove to Germany, where along the Baltic Sea there were still plenty of heathen Sclavs and Finns upon whom the brothers could execute their religious intentions.

It is here that the name of Prussia comes into German history. The Prussians, or Bo-russi, which is the earlier form of the name, were a Slavic race, probably a branch of the Russians. They dwelt in the country around where the seaport city of Dantzic now lies. In the course of centuries the original Prussians were practically exterminated by the Teutonic knights and other energetic converters who came to their aid. A race of German colonists settled the land; but the ancient name clung, and Prussia, the wild border district of the Teutonic knights, has in our day become the leading state of Germany.

A new Eastern peril threatened Europe at this time. The Tartar races, which had followed Attila, once more burst forth under the terrible chieftain Genghis Khan. He conquered Asia, and his descendants, swarming westward, seized upon Russia, and finally appeared on the German borders about 1240. We are told that they brought with them "dragons which spit fire and vomited an intolerable smoke." As gunpowder was already known to the Chinese, it seems probable that we encounter here some primeval form of cannon, the first ever heard in Europe.

There was no united effort to resist the Tartar hosts. Frederick was busy in Italy; the German princes were quarrelling as usual among themselves. The citizens of Breslau made a brave resistance to the invading hordes, and when their city was no longer defensible, they set fire to it with their own hands. The survivors, retreating to a little island in the Oder River, continued their resistance. Meanwhile, the nobles of the surrounding districts of Silesia gathered all their forces under the lead of their duke, Henry the Pious. With less than thirty thousand men, he endeavored to stay the advance of more than five times that number of Tartars at Leignitz. The fight lasted two days. Henry's Polish allies fled; he himself was slain, and the unyielding mass of German troops literally annihilated.

But the invasion was checked. The remaining Tartars had no desire to penetrate further into "the land of the iron-clad men." They withdrew, and turning southward, ravaged Hungary. Here they were met at some unknown spot by the Emperor's sons, Conrad and Enzo. Vast numbers of the marauders were slain, and they were driven back into Russia. It was the last Tartar invasion of Western Europe. By fighting so much among themselves, the Germans had at last become masters of the art, and risen safely above the level of the half-clad, undisciplined, and irregular Tartar hordes.

Frederick was in Germany only once during his later years. His eldest

son, Henry, whom he had made regent of his northern domain, rebelled against him in 1235. For the second time in his life Frederick came north over the Alps in haste and almost alone. His mere presence sufficed to check the rebellion. The populace, still loyal to him, rallied everywhere to his side. Henry, defeated without a battle, entreated pardon and was forgiven. But the treacherous rascal was caught trying to poison his father, and was thrown into prison, where he died some years later.

Meanwhile, being in Germany, the Emperor prepared to celebrate there his third wedding. He had been rather unfortunate in his marriages. His first was to a princess of Aragon, when he was a boy of fifteen in Sicily. A plague suddenly broke out in the city during the festivities. The bride's brother rose from the wedding banquet, staggered to the doorway, and fell dead. Others of the feasters were stricken where they sat, and the young bride and groom fled in fear. Frederick's second wife was Iolanthe, heiress of the kingdom of Jerusalem, from whom came such claim as he had to crown himself the Holy City's king. But Iolanthe died at the birth of her first son, Conrad. So now Frederick had a third wedding, and took for his bride the English princess, Isabelle.

The ceremony was held at Worms, and never had been seen such a gorgeous display. All the poets of the time sang of its wonders, of the dark Saracens in Frederick's train, the jewels and treasures and strange animals he had brought from the East. Seventy-five princes and twelve thousand knights were at the wedding banquet. A great diet of the empire was afterward held at Mainz, where a peace from private war was again proclaimed, together with many other reforms. But these were mere empty words. The Emperor's interest lay wholly in Italy; he had no intention of staying in Germany to see his commands carried out. The nobles, long unused to authority, gave him only lip-service, escorted him to the Alps with pleasant words, and returned—to do as they pleased.

The next year, in 1237, Frederick overthrew a league of the Italian cities, winning a decisive battle over them at Cortenuovo, largely by the help of his Saracen troops. We must regard this as the highest period of his power. His court in Sicily was the centre toward which all Europe turned. Around him gathered the most renowned poets, the most beautiful women, and the most learned scholars. He was a poet himself, penning soft Italian love sonnets; he spoke six languages, and wrote a treatise on falconry. The splendor and, alas! something of the frivolous wickedness of that Sicilian court, are still remembered throughout Europe.

The final struggle between Frederick and Pope Gregory seems to have begun when the Emperor sought to make his much-loved but illegitimate son

Enzio King of Sardinia. Gregory claimed Sardinia as a papal fief, and once more roused the Italian cities to rebellion. In 1241, he summoned a great convocation of the dignitaries of the Church to declare Frederick deposed, hoping that such a council might act with more weight than he alone. Enzio seized the fleet which was bearing many of the churchmen to Rome, and thus broke up the council. Gregory died the same year. The next Pope, Innocent IV., fled from Rome to France and summoned a council there, where Frederick could not interfere. By this council the Emperor was once more solemnly declared excommunicated and deposed.

"Bring me my crowns," said Frederick scornfully, "that I may see which one I have lost." They were all brought before him, seven of them: the imperial diadem of Rome, the royal crown of Germany, the iron one of Lombardy, with those of Sicily, Jerusalem, Sardinia, and Burgundy. The Emperor set each one in succession upon his head. "They are all here," he said; "and much blood shall be shed before they take one from me."

Much blood *was* shed. The hour of the Hohenstaufens' doom had struck. In Germany, where Frederick's eldest surviving son Conrad was regent, a faction of the bishops and princes obeyed the command of the council, and declaring the Emperor deposed, elected Henry of Thuringia to succeed him. When Henry was overthrown by Conrad, they nominated William, Count of Holland, to take his place. The land was desolated with civil war. An old chronicle says: "When the Emperor was condemned by the Church, robbers made merry over their booty. Ploughshares were beaten into swords, reaping-hooks into lances. Men went everywhere with flint and steel, setting in a blaze whatsoever they found."

In Italy matters were even worse. Enzio was captured by the citizens of Bologna. They refused all ransom for him, and the young man of only twenty-three, said to have been the fairest, brightest, and most brilliant of his brilliant race, languished for twenty-two years in a dungeon until he died. Friends fell away from Frederick on every side. Only his first little kingdom, Sicily, remained faithful. His chancellor, the chosen friend of thirty years, was implicated in a plot to poison him. Frederick sought desperately to make peace with the Church, offering to go on another crusade and promising never to return. But all his overtures were sternly rejected. He raised another army, resolved on revenge, but died worn out and despairing, in 1250.

His son, Conrad, was proclaimed Emperor by his partisans as Conrad IV. (1250-1254). But he was driven out of Germany by William of Holland and forced to take refuge in Sicily, where he soon died. Manfred, the last of Frederick's sons, maintained himself heroically in Sicily against all comers. He tried to make peace with the Church, but the popes were grimly resolute

that no member of "that hateful brood of vipers," the Hohenstaufens, should survive. Pope Urban IV. offered the sovereignty of Sicily to Charles of Anjou, brother of the French king.

So French troops entered Italy, and Manfred, finding himself betrayed by some of his own soldiers, with defeat inevitable, sought and found a heroic death upon the field of battle at Benevento, 1266. His wife, the beautiful Grecian princess, Helene of Cypress, fled with their infant children, but she was betrayed to Charles. Her babes were, by his order, taken from her and placed in a dungeon. One of them, a girl, was afterward released; but the three boys were kept imprisoned till they grew old and died.

There remained only one of all the Hohenstaufens, a child called by the Italians Conradin, which means "little Conrad." He was a son of Conrad IV., and when only sixteen strove to win back his family inheritance, leading a little band of adventurers from Germany to attack Charles of Anjou. He was defeated, betrayed into his enemy's hands, and condemned to a public execution in Naples in 1268. Every one was touched by his youth and gallant bearing; Charles' own courtiers entreated mercy for the lad. But Charles was inflexible, and Conradin met his fate with the dauntless valor of his race. He was the "last of the Hohenstaufens."

We must pause to look for a moment at what this line of emperors had done, and failed to do, for Germany. It was their personal character which made them popular. They never labored for the land, as the earlier monarchs had done. Indeed, they constantly subordinated its interests to those of Italy. Good, they had truly accomplished in fostering civilization. Knighthood under them was in its fullest flower. The artisans and craftsmen of Germany became celebrated throughout the world. The marvellous Gothic cathedrals began to rise. Painting became once more a fine art, and coloring in oils was invented. Systems of law were formed, including the Saxon and the Swabian code. The wandering poets or minnesingers of the land grew famous. It was at this time that the Siegfried legends took their final form, as did other legends which Wagner has made immortal in his operas.

One of these wandering bards was the Knight Tannhäuser, of whom legend tells that he was enticed into the mountain of Venus and there detained for seven years amid all manner of sensuous delights. At last his conscience stirred within him, and he fled from the enchantress, and seeking Pope Urban IV. at Rome, besought the Church's pardon. Urban, however, turned from him in horror, declaring that the culprit had as little chance of God's mercy as his dead papal staff had of becoming green wood again. The next morning the Pope's staff had indeed blossomed and borne green leaves, whereupon he sent in haste for Tannhäuser. But the bard had left the court, and was never seen again.

Another famous singer of the times was Wolfram von Eschenbach, who wrote the song of Parzifal, the legend of the Holy Grail. A legendary gathering of all these great minstrels was held at the Wartburg, the court of Hermann of Thuringia, where, in 1207, they had a great poetical contest, the loser to sacrifice his life as well as his fame. Walther of Vogelweide and Henry of Ofterdingen were the champions. The latter lost, and would have been slain had he not crouched at the feet of Hermann's wife, and sought protection under her mantle. Walther of Vogelweide was thus declared greatest of the minnesingers. On Walther's death, he left his estate to his fellow minstrels, the birds, and these are still daily fed with bread in honor of the poet's memory. He was the friend and song-champion of Frederick II. All of these poets lived in the early part of the thirteenth century, and they left no successors. Minstrelsy as well as the other arts, died with the Hohenstaufens.

At the extinction of the Hohenstaufens Germany sank to a depth of disunion, misgovernment, and anarchy, the worst which has ever devastated that much-enduring land. You will notice that after Barbarossa's days there had been no great dukes to lead the rebellions against the emperors. This was because of the persistent policy of the Hohenstaufens in dividing one dukedom after another among different claimants. Thus the death of Conrad IV., instead of leaving four or five great independent duchies to dispute for the empire, left two hundred and seventy-six or more little separate states in Germany, each clamorously assertive of its rights and privileges against the others. One hundred and sixteen of these principalities were under priestly rulers; about a hundred belonged to dukes, princes, counts, or other nobles; while over sixty were free cities, little republics, owing allegiance to no one but the Emperor.

These cities began to rival the Italian ones in their independence, wealth, and power. The northern towns, under the leadership of Lubeck, formed a mighty league, called the Hansa. It was first formed by Lubeck and Hamburg in 1241, and was soon joined by Bremen and the other seaports. At first this was only a commercial arrangement; but in the dark days that followed, the Hansa, driven by necessity, organized armies, owned fleets, punished intermeddling nobles, and even conducted important and successful foreign wars, upon its own authority and under its own flag. Sixty Rhine cities, knowing that they had no mercy to expect at the hands of the nobles, formed a similar league under the lead of Cologne. The hopes of Germany, the promise of future progress and civilization, which had seemed perishing along with the Hohenstaufens, rose once more on firm and sure foundations with the growth of these leagues of stalwart city republics.



RUDOLF AT THE BATTLE OF MARCHFIELD

Chapter LVII

THE GREAT INTERREGNUM AND RUDOLF OF HAPSBURG



AFTER Conrad's death, in 1254, no German prince could be found eager to be called emperor and attempt the government of those two hundred and seventy-six little, separate hornets' nests. William of Holland did indeed claim the position, but nobody paid any serious attention to him. He had not even the real imperial crown, which was retained in Italy; and when his cheap substitute for it was accidentally destroyed by fire on his wedding night, he and his bride nearly perishing with it, the nation only laughed at him, and made a jest of his discomfort.

William finally got into a quarrel with the Frisians in his own county of Holland. While crossing a bog in his heavy armor, he and his horse stuck fast in the mud; and being unable to extricate either himself or the beast, he was overtaken by some peasants, who slew him for his armor, without knowing who he was. So that was the end of his claim to the throne.

The electors made no hurry to place a new emperor above them. Some of them befooled the wealthy Count of Henneburg, extracting large sums of money from him under promise of electing him, without apparently having the faintest intention of doing so. They drew still richer bribes from two ambitious foreigners. Alfonso, King of Castile, in Spain, thought he would like to be called Emperor, and sent, it is said, twenty thousand silver marks to the electors. Then Richard of Cornwall, brother of the English king and

possessed of the fabulously wealthy Cornwall tin mines, began also bidding for the bauble. It is not necessary to accept literally the old statement that he sent thirty-two wagon loads of gold into Germany. Still his arguments must have been weighty, for such electors as had not already voted for the Spaniard, hastened to cast their votes for the Englishman.

So there were two emperors instead of one. Alfonso never came to Germany to be crowned, though having paid for the title he used it, signing himself "Emperor" on his public documents. Richard came to Germany and had a formal coronation at Aix. He was received everywhere with open arms, and made welcome—so long as his money lasted. Then he returned to England, and contented himself, as Alfonso did, with being saluted as "Emperor" at home.

This period, from 1254 to 1273, is called in German histories the *Great Interregnum*. It has been aptly termed the midnight of the darkness of the Middle Ages. Germany, the principal state of Europe, was utterly without government. Each little lord acted as seemed best to himself. It was the time of the robber barons. Every one who could, built himself a strong tower, and lived in it by rapine, and in utter lawlessness. When smoked out of his hole, he died like a wolf, biting to the last. Only the towns fought for order, and even they were distracted by petty brawls within their walls and by quarrels with their bishops and feudal lords without.

The French kings, who had been slowly growing in power, began seizing the fairest German provinces on their border line. One after another these were incorporated with France, and no man interfered to protect the empire. Is it any wonder that the distracted German people looked back with longing to the days of Barbarossa?

By 1273 the condition of the land had become so woeful that the Pope himself interfered to check its downfall. Indeed, he had good cause, for German anarchy had spread to Italy. The merciless Duke Werner and the "Free Companies" of German robbers harried the southern land from end to end. Pope Gregory X. sent stern, and, perhaps, rather frightened, word to the northern bishops and dukes, that if they did not immediately select a real emperor, who could keep order, he would appoint one for them. This may be accepted as the end of the papal wars, which had destroyed two lines of emperors. Henceforward Pope and Emperor each recognized the necessity of the other, and, though differences still existed between them, neither cared to drive the other to extremes.

At Pope Gregory's command the Germans elected Count Rudolf of Hapsburg. He was the founder of the renowned Hapsburg family, which finally did what all the earlier imperial lines had failed to do—made the

empire hereditary in their own line. It is only within the past century that the descendants of the Hapsburgs have ceased to be emperors of Germany, and they are emperors of Austria to-day.

Rudolf of Hapsburg becomes, therefore, a highly important personage in history, a prominence which his character and abilities well deserve. He was not one of the great nobles, and his election had been mainly secured by his cousin Frederick of Hohenzollern—an oddly noteworthy fact, since the Hohenzollerns were one day to become kings of Prussia, the rivals, and in our own times, the conquerors of the Hapsburgs.

The ruins of Rudolf's ancient castle of Hapsburg still exist between Basel and Zurich, in what is now Switzerland, but was then part of the Swabian duchy. The counts of Hapsburg ruled over only a tiny territory there, though Rudolf, through his strength and justice, had come to be looked upon as a sort of governor and protector of the neighboring towns. He was at war with Basel and besieging that city, when the unexpected word of his election as emperor reached him. At first he refused to believe his cousin, who himself hurried to Rudolf with the news. When convinced by the imperial messenger, Rudolf's first official act was to send word of his election to Basel. With the message, "I am now the stronger," he offered the citizens more liberal terms of peace than they had dared to expect. His proposals were eagerly accepted, and his late foes were the first to offer prayers for his prosperous reign.

Pope Gregory came as far as Lausanne to meet him, and the Emperor, kneeling at the churchman's feet, vowed obedience to him. Rudolf had always been a sincerely religious man, a fact which naturally influenced the bishops in his election. Indeed, it is told of him that once in early life he encountered a priest who was struggling up the rugged mountain paths around Hapsburg, bearing a chalice to administer the last sacraments to a dying man. Rudolf dismounted from his horse, insisted on the exhausted priest riding in his stead, and guided the holy man to his destination. On parting, the count presented the horse to the Church, saying: "The beast has carried Christ and his minister; it can never be used again for lesser purposes."

Rudolf never went to Rome to be crowned emperor there. He was wont to explain his refusal and also his submission to Gregory with the shrewd comment: "Rome is like the lion's den in the fable. I see the footsteps of many emperors pointing toward it, but of none returning home."

When elected emperor, Rudolf was fifty-five years old. All his contemporaries unite in representing him as a pattern knight, strong without cruelty, wise without treachery, merciful and generous without weakness or folly. He was tall and thin, with a great hooked nose, and a face that seemed very pale to the ruddy Germans. Profoundly earnest of look and of purpose, this man, who

had undertaken the colossal task of lifting Germany from its pit of despair, was the one to succeed, if to any such ability were given.

At his solemn coronation in Charlemagne's cathedral at Aix, it was found that the imperial sceptre was missing. There was sudden wavering and doubt. Was a coronation legal without that famous symbol of power? Rudolf seized the crucifix from the altar and held it forth. "I will govern with this instead," he said. "It confirms us heaven; it is surely enough to confirm us our little parcels of earth."

The most powerful vassal of the empire was not present at the coronation. This was Ottocar, King of Bohemia. He was not really a German at all, but of Bohemian, that is, of Sclavic blood. During the wild days of the Interregnum he had seized and united under his rule all the eastern provinces of the empire from the Baltic to the Adriatic. Not only Bohemia, but the lands to the north of it, and most of what is now the Austrian Empire, were in his grasp. He had hoped to be elected emperor himself—in fact, the dignity seems to have been promised him by the venal electors. But they feared his power; and they feared also a revolt of their own people, if they thus betrayed the German Empire into the hands of a Slav.

Foiled of this ambition, Ottocar apparently planned to erect his domains into a great independent Sclavic kingdom. Once, when Ottocar had led a crusading army against the Prussians in the north, Rudolf, the "poor count," fought in his train. Ottocar was fond of referring to the Emperor, therefore, as his domestic. When Rudolf summoned him again and again to appear at court and perform the neglected homage for his lands, Ottocar only said: "What does the fellow want? Have I not paid him his wages?"

But the German nobles of Austria, a province founded, as you will remember, to protect Germany from the Slavs and Hungarians, were impatient under the Sclavic yoke, and themselves started the revolt against Ottocar's insolence. They called the Emperor to help them, though, indeed, Rudolf had little to offer except his own good sword and brave leadership. It is said the imperial treasury at the time contained just five bad shillings.

Rudolf, however, took command of such forces as the Austrians could raise; and the revolt against Ottocar soon became so general that he submitted almost without opposition, surrendered all his lands except Bohemia and Moravia, and came to do homage for those. He dressed in his most gorgeous robes; his entire figure blazed with rich jewels, but Rudolf received him in the simple clothes he always wore. "The Bohemian has often laughed at my poor coat," he said; "now my poor coat shall laugh at him."

Ottocar took the Emperor's careless garb as an insult. Or, according to another account, he had stipulated that his submission should be made in

private; but just as he was kneeling before Rudolf the walls of the imperial tent fell apart and revealed him to the whole court, which was drawn up to witness his act of homage. At any rate, he left the imperial presence in a rage, and hurriedly gathering his armies invaded Germany.

The great lords, already jealous of Rudolf's growing power, left him to shift for himself, and it was with very inferior forces that he encountered the Bohemians near Vienna (1278). The battle was long and doubtful. Rudolf was severely wounded, but persisted in his desperate attack, until at last the Bohemians fled. Ottocar was taken prisoner and, despite Rudolf's effort to save him, slain by the revengeful Germans over whom he had tyrannized.

Rudolf, with his usual shrewdness, set to work to make secure his personal power over the lands he had conquered. He married one of his daughters to Ottocar's son, and established the young man on the throne of Bohemia. Most of Ottocar's more southerly dominions were conferred on Rudolf's own son, as Duke of Austria. It was thus that Austria, Styria, and Carniola, became hereditary in the Hapsburg family.

It was not until 1282 that the Emperor returned to the Rhine. He then proclaimed a "land peace" throughout the empire, forbidding robbery and private wars. Of course, this law was not everywhere obeyed, but it had considerable effect; and Rudolf promptly followed it with sterner measures. In one year he destroyed upward of seventy robber castles in Thuringia alone; such of the owners as he could catch were hanged. Several members of his court urged him to spare one of these robbers as being a noble of exalted rank. "You are mistaken," said Rudolf; "he is not a noble. The true nobleman honors virtue, loves justice, practises honor, and defends the helpless."

It is difficult to conceive a more striking contrast than that between the magnificent Hohenstaufens on the one hand, with their imperial splendor, haughty command, and gracious condescension; and on the other this simple, shrewd, homely man, who was their successor, who could receive Ottocar "in an old gray cloak, seated on a three-legged wooden stool," and of whom his courtiers even made the jest that he darned his own clothes.

He certainly dressed no better than his common soldiers. One story of him is that he went into an old woman's hut to warm himself by her fire, and she, never dreaming who he was, ordered him out as a lazy, good-for-nothing, old trooper. He admitted to her that he had become worn out fighting for "that fellow Rudolf." But when he began finding fault with the Emperor, the good mother, unable to get rid of him in any other way, threw a pail of water on her fire, so that the smoke and chill drove him choking and gasping out of doors.

When on a hurried march with his army, Rudolf would pluck a turnip from the fields, and peel and eat it before his men that they might see he fared no better than they. His justice has become a proverb among the Germans. After his death his people said of him: "He was the best warrior of his time. He was the fairest man who ever held the office of judge."

A chronicler of those days writes: "His name spread terror among the evil barons, and gladness among the people. Light rose from darkness; prosperity from desolation." The house of Hapsburg has cause, indeed, to look with pride upon its founder.

When Rudolf died at the age of seventy-four, his son Albert, Duke of Austria, expected to succeed him on the imperial throne. You will remember that Albert had been given most of the possessions of Ottocar of Bohemia, and he now ruled also in the Tyrol and Switzerland. But the same reason which had led the princes to refuse the empire to Ottocar, now debarred Albert: he was too powerful. They wanted an emperor who should be subordinate to them. So they chose Adolf, the Count of Nassau.

Adolf of Nassau (1292-1298) never exercised much real authority. His main aim seems to have been to enrich his own family, as Rudolf had so shrewdly done. But he had neither Rudolf's wisdom nor opportunity, and only entangled himself in endless quarrels and petty wars. Finally he was deposed by the very men who had elected him, on the charge of having brought the empire not peace, but greater confusion. Such imperial power as existed, however, was in Adolf's possession; nor was he likely to surrender it without a struggle. Naturally the nobles turned in their need to Albert of Austria, and offered him the throne, as the man best able to unmake the emperor whom they had preferred before him. Albert gladly accepted the empire, defeated Adolf, and slew him. The ancient writers describe the decisive battle as if it were a single combat between the two ferocious emperors, in which Albert, by a lucky sword-stroke, finally overthrew his equally valiant and determined rival.

Albert of Austria (1298-1308) proved a harsh and evil emperor, upheld only by the wealth and strength of his own possessions, not by the good will of the people. He had but one eye, having lost the other in a remarkable manner, which should make us thankful that doctors know more now than they did in Albert's day. He was ill, and his doctors, suspecting that he had been poisoned, hung him up by the heels and tore out one of his eyes, that the poison might drain out through the empty socket.

It was during Albert's reign that the Swiss provinces first asserted their independence of Germany. Albert claimed a twofold authority over them as Emperor and as head of the house of Austria. The governors he set over

them ruled so harshly that three Alpine provinces finally rebelled against him in both of his capacities, and declared themselves independent of the empire. The provinces were Schwyz, Uri, and Unterwalden. To their uprising belongs the legend of William Tell, which may very possibly be true, and is, at any rate, an interesting and stirring story.

Gessler, one of Albert's governors, set up his hat, or perhaps the Austrian ducal cap, upon a pole and commanded all the peasants to salute it. Tell refused, and being a noted archer, was commanded, by way of punishment, to pierce with an arrow an apple placed upon the head of his six-year-old son. The brilliant feat was successfully performed, but in embracing his son Tell dropped another arrow, which he had concealed about his person. When Gessler demanded the purpose of this second arrow, the desperate peasant answered: "To kill thee, tyrant, had I slain my son." Tell was bound and placed in Gessler's boat, to be carried across the mountain lake to a dungeon. But on the way a sudden storm rose, and Tell, as an expert boatman, was released to save them all from drowning. He jumped ashore with his bow, escaped, and afterward from a secret ambush shot Gessler with the very arrow first prepared against him. The flame of revolt, once kindled, spread from valley to valley, and everywhere the Austrian governors were expelled or slain.

Before Albert could take any decisive steps against the rebels he was killed by his own nephew, John, a youth of nineteen, called for the crime John the Parricide. Albert had withheld from John the castle and lands of Hapsburg, the original home of the family and John's rightful inheritance. The young man, after repeatedly demanding his property, plotted against his uncle's life. The Emperor was artfully separated from his train in crossing a river, and then John and his accomplices hewed their victim down with swords. They fled, leaving Albert dying where he lay. A single terrified peasant woman watched the last moments of the dying Emperor, holding his head on her bosom, and striving to stanch with her hair the fast-ebbing blood.

Some years later, 1315, Albert's son Leopold took up his father's work and strove to reduce the Swiss to submission. When he and his generals were planning how they should enter the Alpine mountains, his court fool made a jest, saying, "You might better plan how you will get out of them again." The jest was wiser than all the generals' council. Nearly ten thousand splendidly armored Austrian troops marched up the pass of Morgarten, at whose head waited a little Swiss army, scarce thirteen hundred strong. A band of fifty Swiss peasants, exiled from their homes for debt, saw the approach of their country's foes, and began rolling rocks down upon the invaders from the surrounding cliffs. The plunging masses of stone

became avalanches; many Austrians were killed and the rest thrown into helpless confusion and terror. The little Swiss army, seeing its opportunity, swept down upon the foe and routed them. Leopold escaped only by hiding alone among the mountains and stealing in darkness along the dangerous and rugged paths. It was this famous battle of Morgarten that first established the independence of Switzerland.



OFFICIAL SEAL OF ALBERT I.



BATTLE OF SEMPACH
(From an old Manuscript)

Chapter LVIII

THE LUXEMBURG EMPERORS AND THE HUSSITE WARS

WE have seen the strong tendency which, during the early days of the empire, had caused its sovereignty to descend in the line of one family, until that became extinct. After the reigns of Rudolf and Albert, the house of Hapsburg seems always to have felt that it had a hereditary claim to the throne. The other princes, however, were determined to keep all importance in their own hands, and they persistently avoided choosing the powerful dukes of Austria. One wobbly emperor was elected after another during a century or more. These sovereigns quarrelled with the popes, they fought among themselves, and they warred with France.

The best of them was Henry VII., of Luxemburg, a well-meaning and capable emperor, who led an army into Italy and died there, poisoned, some say, in the sacrificial wine, given him by a monk.

Henry's successor, Ludwig IV., of Bavaria, battled for years against an Austrian claimant for the throne, and was excommunicated by three successive popes.

Toward the end of his reign (1346), an appalling plague, called the "Black Death," began sweeping over Europe, and continued its ravages for several years. Many of the terrified people gathered into wandering bands of penitents, who were called "flagellants," because, as they passed along the road from city to city, they flogged themselves in most savage fashion. They hoped thus to obtain mercy for their sins. Naturally the plague followed them as they

went, and they died by thousands. Ludwig the Bavarian seems rather conceitedly to have regarded the "Black Death" as a judgment brought upon Europe by his personal sin in opposing the popes. He died a prey to superstitious gloom and despair, and his body was long refused burial by order of the Church he had offended. One-third of the people in Europe are said to have fallen victims to this awful scourge.

Henry of Luxemburg had managed to make his son John King of Bohemia. John in his blind old age joined the French in alliance against the English, and fell fighting bravely at the battle of Crecy. By his side fought his young son, Charles, who became King of Bohemia, and afterward Emperor of Germany, as Charles IV.

Charles IV. (1347-1378) begins what is sometimes called, from his grandfather, Henry of Luxemburg, the Luxemburg line of emperors. Charles was really much more of a Slav than a German, inheriting from his Bohemian mother his short, thickset figure, drooping head, high cheek bones, and straight black hair. He was cunning and treacherous, and used his power over the feeble empire mainly to improve his own position and that of his family.

The Germans, complaining of his neglect, say he was a father to Bohemia, but only a stepfather to the empire. It is true that he devoted his principal energies to his own kingdom, making it the leading state of Germany. Prague, Bohemia's capital, became the most beautiful of the German cities, filled with palaces and splendid gardens. It became also the intellectual centre of the land. Charles founded there the first German university in 1348. Students who had formerly journeyed into France or Italy now flocked to Prague. In a few years they numbered seven or eight thousand.

Charles is mainly known, however, for his proclamation of the "Golden Bull" (1356), which settled definitely the manner of electing emperors, and remained the law of the land for four hundred and fifty years. It begins: "Every kingdom which is at odds with itself will fall. For its princes are the companions of robbers; and, therefore, God hath removed the light from their minds. They have become blind leaders of the blind; and with blinded thoughts they commit misdeeds." By which it would seem that the princes understood perfectly what was the trouble with their unhappy land. All they lacked was the will to remedy it.

This precious document made the electors practically independent princes, and thus destroyed every faintest hope of a real union among the Germans. The number of electors had long been fixed more or less positively at seven. These were originally the dukes of the four "nations"—Franks, Saxons, Bavarians, and Swabians, and the three chancellors of the empire; that is, the archbishops of Mayence, Cologne, and Treves. There was no longer a duke

either of Swabia or Franconia; and Charles now settled that the four electors from the nobility were to be the King of Bohemia, which meant himself; the Margrave of Brandenburg, a rank he secured for his second son, Sigismund; and the feeble and subservient rulers of the Rhine Palatinate and the little fragment of Saxony, called Saxe-Wittenberg. The dukes of Austria were deliberately barred out, as were other great nobles who might have acted too independently of Charles. In other words, the Bohemian king had, with the aid of the churchmen, established an electoral college, in which the dominance of his family influence seemed fairly secure.

The strength of the position Charles thus obtained is proved by the fact that it survived the weakness and folly of his successors. His subservient electors during his life named his eldest son, Wenzel, to succeed him. Wenzel, or Wenceslaus (1378-1410), scarcely left Bohemia and the beautiful city his father had created. He was a savage, drunken boor. The Germans, viewing his outbreaks from a safe distance, laughed at him for a fool. The Bohemians, compelled to suffer under his fury, feared him as a bloody and terrible tyrant.

He kept great bloodhounds by his side even in his bed-chamber; and his first wife, rising from her sleep one night, was torn to pieces by the ferocious brutes. Wenzel's executioner was his constant companion, and any person who displeased him was beheaded on the spot. Some one wrote upon his palace door, "Wenzel, another Nero"; whereon he himself added underneath, "If I have not been, I will be now." He commanded his wife's confessor, John of Nepomuck, to reveal whatever she had told in her secret confessions. On the holy man's refusing, he was cruelly tortured, and at last drowned by being hurled from one of the river bridges of Prague. Hence John of Nepomuck has been made the patron saint of Bohemia, and of all bridges.

It was during Wenzel's reign, if reign it can be called, that trouble again arose between the Swiss and the dukes of Austria, and the Swiss peasants won a decisive victory at Sempach, 1386. The heavily armored Austrian knights advanced on foot, their levelled lances presenting an impenetrable row of steel. The unarmored Swiss hesitated. One among them, Arnold of Winkelried, saw the only way to victory. "Comrades," he said, "I will open a path for you. Take care of my wife and children." Rushing on the foe, he received as many of the lances as he could gather in his two arms and his breast. The Swiss rushed into the gap thus broken, and beat down the heavy weighted and less active knights. Duke Leopold of Austria was slain, and his army fled in all directions.

Encouraged by the success of the peasantry, the cities of the upper Rhine valley formed a union known as the Swabian league, and for years defied the nobles and the Emperor. At one time it looked as if they would become as

independent as the Swiss mountaineers; but at length they were reduced to submission. The rich cities of Holland were also becoming estranged from the empire, and Flanders, the region which we call Belgium to-day, became almost wholly united with France.

The Emperor Wenzel's indifference to all this turmoil and weakening of the empire, and also his increasing savagery, became so notorious that efforts were at length made to depose him. Wenzel, secure in Bohemia, paid little attention to the various claimants to his title, until his own brother Sigismund interfered.

Sigismund, the second son of Charles IV., was the best of his family; though that, you will see, is not claiming much for him. He was tall and handsome, a ruddy German, while Wenzel was, like his father, a sallow Slav. Sigismund was well-meaning, though not particularly brilliant, and was one of the vainest men that ever lived. You will recall that Charles had made him Elector of Brandenburg; he had also married him to a daughter of the King of Hungary; and through this alliance Sigismund, after considerable struggling, succeeded to the Hungarian throne.

As Sigismund's power increased, he interfered with Wenzel to save their entire family from destruction. Twice he had his brother imprisoned as a madman. Finally, in 1410, Wenzel was once more deposed, and Sigismund had himself elected emperor. "I vote for myself," he said in the electoral council. "There is no prince in the empire I know better, none who equals me in power or in the art of governing." Two of the other electors, however, failed to agree with him, and voted for his aged cousin, Jobst of Moravia, who is chiefly noted as being the man of whom a sarcastic chronicler wrote, "He passed for a great man, but there was nothing great about him but the length of his beard." So Germany had three members of the House of Luxemburg, each claiming to be emperor at the same time.

This same year of 1410 saw a similar unhappy contest raging in the papacy. There were three churchmen, each claiming to be pope, and each upheld by a vociferous faction of his partisans.

To Sigismund belongs the credit of terminating this disastrous state of affairs. In the empire, he succeeded in persuading all his family to unite upon him as their candidate. Even Wenzel peacefully surrendered to him the imperial crown. Then Sigismund called a great council of the church, to meet at Constance in the year 1414, to settle the papal scandal.

This famous Council of Constance was probably the most elaborate church assembly ever held. Delegates came from every country of Europe. Even the Eastern Emperor, who did not acknowledge the Pope's authority, and even the Mahometan Turks, sent ambassadors to the council. One hundred and

fifty thousand visitors gathered in Constance; and the deliberations of the council lasted nearly four years. Not all of this time was spent in learned disputations; there were tournaments, pageants, and receptions, for the entertainment of the visiting sovereigns. Merchants, mountebanks, jugglers, and tricksters of every kind, thronged the city. For the first time men of the various nations met all together, and could be compared. A thoughtful looker-on at the kaleidoscopic spectacle has left us his judgment upon them. "The Germans," he says, "are quick-tempered, but persistent; the French haughty and boastful; the English prompt and shrewd; the Italians subtle and intriguing."

Sigismund lorded it over them all to his heart's content, making himself a bit ridiculous occasionally by his vain pretensions. In his opening Latin speech he stumbled a bit in his grammar, and when a cardinal ventured to correct him, he answered haughtily, "I am Lord of the Latins (Romans) and above their grammar."

Later the Emperor left Constance, and took advantage of the universal attention centred on him to make a stately tour of other lands, ostensibly for the purpose of drawing all powers to the council. Paris received him flatteringly as the greatest potentate of the world.

In England the Duke of Gloucester met him with an armed force and, wading into the water before the Emperor could land, demanded to know if the visit was meant to assert any sort of authority over England. It was not until Sigismund assured the Duke to the contrary that he was permitted to come ashore. While Sigismund was being entertained at London by the cautious English, the Count of Holland, whose fleet was to bring the Emperor home, quarrelled with his imperial master and sailed off with the ships. Sigismund was thus left a virtual prisoner among the English, until he agreed to all their politely worded demands, and they saw fit to send him home.

The council did what it was mainly called to do, settled the papal schism. It deposed all three popes and appointed a fourth in their stead, who was generally acknowledged as Martin V. There had been a second task, however, before the council, and this resulted only in dreary and unfortunate failure. Men had long talked of the need of reform within the Church. Indeed, reform was the main subject under learned discussion at Constance throughout the whole four years. But all the talk came to nothing; and at last the new Pope settled the council by abruptly departing from it in 1418, whereupon the remaining members felt their energy flag, and one after another betook himself home in some bewilderment.

The city of Constance was ruined and never recovered from its too lavish entertainment of its guests. One main cause of this was that the impecunious

Sigismund had contracted debts on every side, and never paid a penny of them—an imperial example which naturally found a host of imitators.

We have yet to speak of the grim tragedy that was to many the most momentous act of the Council of Constance. This was the execution of John Huss. Huss was a leader among the party seeking reform. He was a Bohemian peasant, who had through his intellectual ability made himself a professor at the great university Charles IV. had founded in Prague. There he began preaching his doctrines of reform; and the nobility of his words and of his life led most of the students to accept his ideas. The whole university was disrupted. The extreme partisans of the Church declared him a heretic. The Pope condemned his teachings. His followers, however, stood by him and elected him head of the university. Huss then offered to submit his doctrines to a Church council, if one were called. So important a man as the head of the Prague University could not well be ignored; and his offer was one reason among the many for calling the assembly at Constance.

Huss journeyed there under a safe conduct from the Emperor Sigismund, and the promise of an opportunity to explain his beliefs. But all promises were ignored, and he was thrown into prison. "No faith," said the council, "need be kept with a heretic." When Huss tried to speak at his trial, he was howled down and condemned unheard. He appealed to the Emperor; but Sigismund sat in silence, though he blushed his shame. Huss was stripped of his priestly robes, a tall heretic cap covered with pictured devils was placed on his head, and he was burned to death. His courage and firmness sustained him to the end. "Light the fire in front," he said calmly to the executioner, who would have kindled it from the rear. "Had I feared fire, I should not have stood here."

Bohemia was infuriated over this treacherous crime. Even the deposed Emperor, Wenzel, who was still King of Bohemia, had upheld Huss, though, perhaps, with no very deep conviction. One of his palace officers, John Ziska, complained to him of the unavenged tragedy. "I can do nothing about it," said Wenzel, with one of his habitual sarcasms, "but why don't *you* try?" Ziska took him at his word, summoned the supporters of Huss to arms, and began the terrible Hussite wars.

He and his followers rushed to fanatical extremes. The Germans of the town council of Prague, refusing to follow his lead, were hurled from a window of the town-hall onto the spears of a mob beneath. Romish priests were burnt wherever found. Wenzel, crazed with the excitement, burst a blood-vessel and died. The splendid churches and palaces of Prague, in which he and his father Charles had taken so much pride, were looted or destroyed. The city was ruined.

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